

**BIRDS COMMUTING ACROSS THE RUNWAY:
how to reduce their bird strike risk?**

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Summary

All bird movements can be classified into three categories;

1. the fall and spring migration (<http://ecogrid.sara.nl/bambas>)
2. birds present at airports (habitat management is the key for successful bird control)
3. commuting routes

Not only birds present at airports, but also birds commuting across the runway from and to locations outside the airport boundaries may pose a threat to departing and landing aircraft. Many species, among which gulls, geese, cormorants, ducks, flamingoes and starlings have foraging sites that can be miles away from their sleeping / breeding places.

Dealing with those commuting birds is complicated since only their flying route leads them over the runway - their sleeping and foraging sites are not within the airport's property. The birds have another legal status as would they reside at the airport. Since many of the commuting birds sleep / breed in protected nature areas, the solution to the problem is even more complex.

According to the new ICAO standards, *bird attractants in the airport vicinity are not allowed, ... unless the planners can guarantee the aircraft's safety.*

Unfortunately, it's very difficult to predict whether a bird attractant will actually attract birds and, even more important, whether these birds will interfere with the aircraft. Up to now, it seems easier for the spatial planners to "predict" that their planned 'bird attractants' will *not* attract birds...

Recording the (repeated) warnings about possible bird strike hazards might be helpful in court, but then it's too late! In The Netherlands we tend to the solution of executing a field and radar study to assess the bird strike *before* and *after* the realisation of the bird attractant. The 'after' assessment should be repeated periodically, or even better, permanently. The permission for the planner to create the bird attractant should have a clause that, when an increase in the bird strike risk is proven to be due to the bird attractant, the planner has to conduct bird control measurements to decrease this risk.

How to deal with natural changes (for example different vegetation successions hosting different bird communities) causing an increase of the bird strike risk is still subject to discussion.